

The Wrack Line

Newsletter of Parker River National Wildlife Refuge • Newburyport, MA



United States Fish & Wildlife Service

Spring/Summer, 2020

FWS Director Visits Parker River and Great Bay NWRs

by Matt Poole, Visitor Services Manager

In mid-June, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Director Aurelia Skipwith visited several national wildlife refuges in New England, including Parker River and Great Bay. Refuge staff coordinated closely with the regional office to arrange interesting things for the Director to see and do at each site. As with most VIP visits, coordination centered on preparing an agenda, sprucing things up onsite, and liaising with a range of people including the media, local congressional staffs, and partners. Photo opps — specifically where and with whom — are always an important part of the planning mix. Because the Director was traveling by herself, without the usual entourage, photo documenting the visits became the province of refuge staff (which we were happy to help with!)

Director Skipwith arrived at Parker River on a very warm and sunny Thursday afternoon (June 18). The first item on the agenda called for a “meet and greet” near the refuge entrance sign. Included among the assembled refuge partners were Newburyport Mayor Donna Holaday, several leaders from MA DCR and MassWildlife, and Bill Gette, President of the Friends of Parker River NWR. The purpose of the gathering near the sign was, in part, to celebrate the recent reopening of the refuge road to motor vehicles.

Next up came an opportunity for the refuge to show off a section of the new Hellcat boardwalk dune loop. While still under construction, the contractor had done a superb job laying down enough decking for the group to walk all the way out to the new observation deck, a promontory providing sweeping views of dune and ocean. Very impressed with what she saw, the Director congratulated the contractor



Photo: Matt Poole/FWS
Director Skipwith in Front of the Parker River Entrance Sign

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FWS Director Visits Parker River and Great Bay NWRs

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and other project partners for their great work. More than a few group photos followed against that majestic backdrop!

After a ride down the North Pool dike aboard the refuge's "magic bus," and stopping along the way to learn a little about some of the refuge's salt marsh-related work from wildlife biologist Nancy Pau, the group gathered 'round the Tom Stubbs memorial bench, at the edge of the marsh, just west of Sub Headquarters. There, Director Skipwith presented LE officer Gareth Williams with a special recognition award for having recently saved the life of a refuge visitor. Clearly, he was very touched by the occasion!

At about 9:00 a.m. the next morning, Director Skipwith arrived at Great Bay NWR (located in Newington, NH). There, gathered inside the expansive, chain link fence-defined 'former weapons storage area' or FWPA (a legacy of the old Pease Air Force

Base), NH Fish and Game Department biologists provided her with an overview of the multi-partner efforts underway to help the imperiled New England cottontail (NEC). The FWPA has been subdivided into two, eight-acre captive rearing pens. Wild NEC bunnies, sourced from Rhode Island, are released into the pens with the idea that their natural reproduction will yield more bunnies that can, in turn, be released into wild NEC habitat in southern Maine and New Hampshire. Easily the highlight of her Great Bay visit, the Director had an opportunity to release two young NECs into a captive rearing pen!

After leaving Great Bay, Director Skipwith went on to visit both Rachel Carson NWR (in Wells, ME) and the Eastern Massachusetts NWR Complex (based at Great Meadows NWR in Sudbury, MA). Her visits to Parker River and Great Bay NWRs were both successful and fun to be a part of! ◀



All Photos: Matt Poole/FWS

Clockwise from top:

Director Skipwith walks Hellcat Dune Loop at Parker.

Officer Gareth Williams receives commendation.

The New England cottontail.

Director Skipwith releases New England Cottontail at Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge.

Virtual Programming During a Time of Quarantine

by Matt Pfannenstiel, Visitor Services Ranger

With refuge staff practicing social distancing, and therefore no programs and events to conduct, what was our visitor services staff to do? One of the best answers for me was Facebook and Facebook Live. If you follow the refuge on Facebook, you may have had some familiar faces pop up in videos on your feed in the last couple of months. These videos are a feature of Facebook that allows refuge staff to reach our visitors and let everyone know what is going on at the refuge.

Figuring out how to use this tool has been a lot of fun, but has certainly come with a learning curve. We needed to ask ourselves a number of questions including: "Who do we want to reach with our content?," "Who are we currently reaching?," "What is the message we want to share with each video?," and "How do we know if we are having success?." Having used Facebook for outreach in the past, we knew what our base consisted of in the local Newburyport area. We also knew that families especially would be looking for something to do now with everyone going to school virtually. That immediately gave us the idea to do something that families could do together, like a craft. Shelby and I worked together and put together a quick plan for our first Facebook live, which would be a craft that could be done with materials people already have at home.

The first craft we did was called Splatter Bird Art, which could be done at home with simple materials including paper, paint and markers. The video was a lot of fun and we knew quickly that this would be a great way to interact with everyone while people were home keeping their distance from each other. Every week since, we have been putting up live videos with easy crafts, history talks, homemade projects, and even showed off the new interactive animal tracks exhibit in the visitor center.

As we have continued to produce these videos, we have learned how to deal with technical issues, such as sound and lighting, experimenting with different locations and ultimately settling on the Friend's Reading Room. One of the other challenges we had

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Splatter bird art with Ranger Shelby Stoll.



Ranger Matt Pfannenstiel leads a virtual program on the predators of Plum Island.

Featured Videos from Our Facebook Archive!



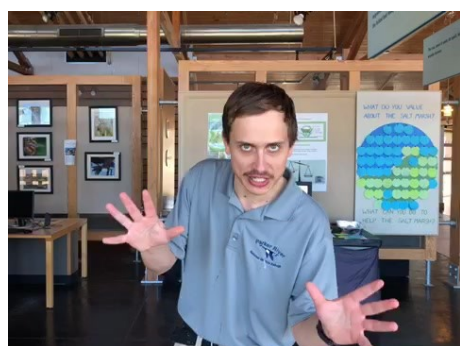
Warbler Hand Puppet



Adorable Ladybug Craft



Salt Marsh Sun Catcher



Animal Tracking Exhibit



Earth Day Projects to Do at Home
with Lauren and Shelby



Climate Change
and the Salt Marsh Sparrow

Virtual Programming During a Time of Quarantine

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is figuring out the appropriate amount of movement; the less the camera moves the more engaging the visitors became. By making this a regularly scheduled event, we have found that you may get repeat visitors interested in the content week after week; hence, the craft videos have become a weekly theme.

Over time we have seen more and more people viewing and engaging with our Facebook Live videos and have continued to play with the style of what is best. One unique example is when I figured out how to livestream the entries of the 2020 Beach Sign Youth Art Contest. We had parents, grandparents and teachers comment with excitement when they saw their kid's art contest submission.

While our Facebook Live series has concluded, we hope you will take the time to check out our past programs, some of which are featured above. If you're reading *The Wrack Line* online, just click the title to launch the video. All of our videos have been archived for your viewing pleasure on our Facebook page. Hope to see you soon...virtually! ◀

www.facebook.com/ParkerRiverNWR/videos

Project Update: Hellcat Boardwalk

by Matt Poole, Visitor Services Manager

The one thing that has not slowed down during the Covid-19 pandemic is progress on building the new (and vastly improved) Hellcat boardwalk trail. The contractor has been doing a superb job out there! The contract period extends through the end of the year, by the way. So, while I am emphasizing how well things have been going out there, all it takes is a period of bad weather, or a sudden lumber shortage, to set things off pace. But, as they say, 'so far, so good!' Last winter's relative lack of snowfall certainly helped. We are all very much looking forward to the day when the ribbon is cut and refuge visitors are turned loose to enjoy their new Hellcat boardwalk trail. Stay tuned!

Very much related to the new boardwalk is what we in visitor services refer to as the 'visitor experience.' Walking along a spiffy new boardwalk, particularly if it passes through a beautiful natural area, is enjoyable (and perhaps even calorie-burning!). However, just imagine how much better that experience can be when you are presented with interesting things to learn, think and feel about in the course of walking those planks! That is the essence of what we call 'interpretation.' Effective interpretation, like any other worthwhile enterprise, requires a good deal of planning. What topics do we focus on? What compelling messages, or stories, do we convey about



The observation deck on the new Hellcat Dune Loop.

those topics? Who are we focusing this facilitated experience on? That, in 'the interpretive biz,' is what we call a target audience. How do we create an interpretive experience that appeals to multiple senses? If we can do that, the experience will have more of an impact. The best interpretation causes people to FEEL something. They may even feel to the point of DOING something (e.g., actively supporting conservation). Regarding the new Hellcat boardwalk, we are just beginning to think about what could be done, interpretively, to maximize the visitor experience out there. If you have any ideas or suggestions, feel free to let us know! ◀



Panoramic view from the Hellcat Dune Loop observation deck.

Freeman Tilden and His 6 Principles of Interpretation

by Matt Poole, Visitor Services Manager

Freeman Tilden is widely regarded as the 'Father of Interpretation.' As the Chief of Interpretation for the National Park Service during the 1950s, Tilden wrote ***Interpreting Our Heritage***, a book in which he laid out his six interpretive principles that continue to guide the field of interpretation to this day. While his words may be a little stilted, the core of his message is pure gold. As this old ranger begins to 'cogitate' about interpretation and the new Hellcat boardwalk, these six principles are always part of that thinking:



- Any interpretation that does not somehow relate what is being displayed or described to something within the personality or experience of the visitor will be sterile.
- Information, as such, is not Interpretation. Interpretation is revelation based upon information. But they are entirely different things. However, all interpretation includes information.
- Interpretation is an art, which combines many arts, whether the materials presented are scientific, historical or architectural. Any art is in some degree teachable.
- The chief aim of Interpretation is not instruction, but provocation.
- Interpretation should aim to present a whole rather than a part, and must address itself to the whole man rather than any phase.
- Interpretation addressed to children (say up to the age of twelve) should not be a dilution of the presentation to adults, but should follow a fundamentally different approach. To be at its best, it will require a separate program.

Getting to Know the Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)

by Matt Poole, Visitor Services Manager

One of the reasons I love leading tours at Great Bay National Wildlife Refuge during the warmer months is that our visitors are very likely to see an osprey 'up close and personal.' Why am I so confident? Pretty simple: there are not one, but three osprey nests along the tour route!

The osprey is one of the largest raptors (or birds of prey) that we see in our part of the world. Weighing up to 4.5 pounds, and with a wingspan of 5 to 6 feet, they have a commanding presence. As with many raptors, the female tends to be larger than the male. Ospreys typically mate for life and can live up to 25 years in the wild. The ospreys we see here in New England during the warmer months overwinter in Central and South America.

While fish comprises about 99% of an osprey's diet, they will also dine on snakes, eels, and frogs. Watching an osprey catch a fish is memorable. Plunging

into the water feet first with great velocity, the bird may entirely disappear below the surface of the water, only to emerge moments later with one or two fish in its talons. In flight, an osprey will almost always carry the fish upright and facing forward (for aerodynamic efficiency).

An osprey nest is hard to miss. Almost always located in the open near a pond, lake, river or coastal waterway, the nests can be seen sitting atop old snags, telephone poles, channel markers, and human-provided nest platforms. One of the Great Bay nests is built on top of an old Pease Air Force Base lamp post, surrounded by a collection of Cold War era bunkers! The nests are made from sticks and lined with bark, grass, vines, and algae. Because an active nest is further fortified by birds each successive year, it may eventually reach a diameter of 6' and a depth of 10-13' — big enough for a person to sit in.

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Photo: Matt Poole/FWS

Getting to Know the Osprey



All Photos: Matt Poole/FWS

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in April or May 1–4 eggs are laid over a number of days. The average clutch size is 3. Both parents help with incubating the eggs. Incubation lasts 36–42 days. The young can fly after 60 days, but will often stay with their parents for another 2–3 months, before migrating, on their own, to the wintering grounds. Young ospreys will stay on the wintering grounds for 2–3 years, before migrating north for the first time.

Seeing an osprey in the wild provides an interpreter with a super opportunity to talk about the historical, pervasive use of DDT in the U.S. No doubt about it, DDT is a very effective pesticide. However, because it caused eggshell thinning, it had a calamitous impact on raptors such as the osprey, bald eagle and peregrine falcon. The good news? Forty years after DDT use was banned (1972), and supported by the provision of hundreds of nesting platforms across the landscape, osprey numbers are way up! ◀

A New Biologist Reflects After One Year at Parker River

by Lauren Healey, Biological Technician

If any of you are on Facebook, you may be familiar with the “memories” that pop up from time to time, a post or photo from years ago. Today I opened mine and was befuddled to see that I started my job here as a biological technician one whole year ago! On May 14, 2019 I shrugged off my backpacking backpack after a 4-month long trip to New Zealand and hoisted on my field backpack. So what’s happened since then?

Well, I immediately dove into my main task, controlling the invasive species known as pepperweed. I set about scouting out sites, assigning crews and pulling my first stem. My pulling effort eventually turned into 63 bags, and 273 bags between my team. Call me crazy, but I love weeding! Now I get paid to weed and listen to music — sounds good to me, well, except on those really hot days!

Then to my excitement, I was sent off to boat training! Despite living near the water all my life (I’m a Newburyport native) I’ve never taken up many “watery” hobbies like boating. Now it was time to

learn. Luckily, at the beginning of the day I decided that there were clouds in the sky and I didn’t need sunscreen, I’m part Italian after all! It turns out I’m more Irish. Despite my wonderfully red face, which my parents loved commenting on, I did learn how to drive a boat! Now I was able to help reach our remote bird survey and invasive species points.

A final highlight for me over the summer was monitoring our marsh restoration work. Due to the salt marsh haying and other farming that happened in the marsh, there are a plethora of ditches left behind. Many of these are clogged, causing water to sit on the marsh and kill vegetation. I got to watch as these areas were transformed from open pools to bare soil to vegetated marshes in just a few months. To monitor these, we placed water recorders in pools to see if the water level went down. This involved me plunging my hand into cold water (I’m a bit of a baby about cold water) to zip tie the ‘loggers’ to metal poles.

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Photo: Lauren Healey/FWS

Backpacking in New Zealand.



Photo: Lauren Healey/FWS

Learning to drive the refuge boat.

A New Biologist Reflects After One Year at Parker River

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Soon the field season began to wind down and I apprehensively transitioned to the office. I was worried about becoming a computer-tapping robot like many of my newly employed friends warned. I jumped into the rabbit hole of “what do I want to do with the rest of my life.” Once I poked my head back up, I realized it was great to be able to analyze the data I had collected and help steer decisions. I embraced outreach work and sharpened my computer mapping skills. Although I enjoyed school, I was happy to be finally creating a product that people would see, read and use, AND I finally got to learn what a biologist does when the weather gets cold.

That being said, like all outdoor enthusiasts, I eagerly awaited the return of the field season. Just as I was shimmying on my boots, things took an unexpected turn with the arrival of COVID-19. Things began shutting down, including field work. I felt a little stuck in limbo. I continued analyzing our backlogged data as the days continued to warm (we have a near endless supply of data to play with and questions to answer). Now, like many of you, I am just waiting and hoping for a healthy outcome.

Overall, I am grateful to have started my journey as a wildlife biologist and am excited for what critter’s paths I will cross in the future. ◀



Photo: Lauren Healey/FWS

Celebrating with one of our volunteers after pulling, bagging and collecting a full truck’s worth of pepperweed.



Photo: Lauren Healey/FWS

Placing recorders to monitor water levels.

Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge Turns 50!

by Peggy Hobbs, Administrative Officer & Heritage Committee Member

As a member of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service’s Heritage Committee, I’m working with Karl Spomayer, manager of the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge, in planning the refuge’s 50th anniversary celebration. The Anniversary commemorates the re-naming and dedication of the refuge that occurred in June 1970. Plans include a yearlong series of monthly forms of outreach and events, beginning in June 2020 thru June 2021 to celebrate this legacy. They will reflect on different themes common to both Rachel Carson’s life and the Mission of the Service with a special emphasis on the Refuge’s role in each. There will also be a panel-style video interview of former Refuge employees in spring 2021. Stay tuned on the Rachel Carson National Wildlife Refuge’s Facebook page for up-to-date information.

Connecting to Nature with Conservation Crafts

by Shelby Stoll, Visitor Services Ranger

Following the shutdown of life as we knew it, social distancing and the closure of schools and businesses meant that most children were now stuck at home. This new reality got me thinking about how the refuge staff could reach the public — and children in particular — with the tools available to us. Inspired by the way my mom kept me and my sister entertained for hours as children, arts and crafts seemed to be the perfect avenue to inspire creativity, and to connect people to nature from the indoors. That was the start of two months' worth of weekly wildlife-themed crafting presentations on Facebook Live.

My primary motivation when I started producing these crafting livestreams was to gain experience talking to the refuge audience, and to provide a resource for families quarantining at home due to COVID 19. For my first craft, I showed viewers how to make a cartoonish bird using a paint splatter, something I decided to call 'Bird Splatter Art.' Going into it, I knew that I wanted to make a bird-related craft, seeing as birds are such a crucial component of Parker River NWR. I didn't know then that I'd still be posting these crafting videos two months later, or how I would tie future crafts to the refuge, but I felt that it was important to make a connection from the beginning.

For my second craft, I went back to an old favorite inspired by the current toilet paper hysteria: 'Paper Tube Binoculars.' Rather than laying out a precise set of directions, this project was more about encouraging creativity, and in utilizing crafts to get kids excited about nature and interested in what might lay just outside their bedroom window.

Subsequent crafts were inspired by different things. Several were directly related to what I've seen outside on the refuge or the Visitor Center, such as the 'Ladybug Chain' and the 'Warbler Stick Puppet.' Other crafts were more generally inspired by the refuge, such as the 'Glowing Salt Marsh Lanterns' and the 'Salt Marsh Sun Catchers.' In a few instances, I remembered an elementary school project and set out to adapt it for this new scenario. The 'Plover Scratch Art' and 'Plover and Tern Paper Collage' are



Ranger Shelby Stoll displays some of the crafts she has made during her Facebook Live broadcasts.

two such examples. Still other crafts involved a quick peek into our in-house arts and crafts closet or some online searching for inspiration.

From the beginning, I knew that I wanted to use common materials that most people would have on hand or would be easy to obtain. Trying to figure out how to make something work with what you have is part of the fun, creative process. Additionally, using simple materials make the crafts attainable for people of all income levels, and it doesn't require a special trip out to the store at a time when such trips have been heavily discouraged.

My videos attracted a small audience of dedicated followers, and I have thoroughly enjoyed engaging with these viewers and developing new content for them on a weekly basis.

Besides showcasing the crafts on Facebook Live, I've also created detailed PDFs explaining each project's steps in detail. These downloadable files are now available on the refuge website and can be accessed straight from the Parker River homepage. I hope these step-by-step craft projects will remain a valuable resource long after the livestreams end for refuge visitors seeking a little creative inspiration. ◀

An Introduction to 'Climate Café'

by Matt Pfannenstiel, Visitor Services Ranger

During this era of social distancing, more and more of our work is moving to online platforms. An example of this is something called Climate Café. Never heard of a Climate Café, you say? Well let me tell you about the engaging and educational experience that is a Climate Café.

Climate Cafes are an opportunity for people to have meaningful and impactful discussions about climate change. Hosted by high school students, Climate Cafes have been going on for years now in towns all across the area. Typically, these are discussions done in small groups (about 4 to 5 people), where they talk about a question related to climate change such as "What could you say to improve the odds of a great conversation when discussing climate

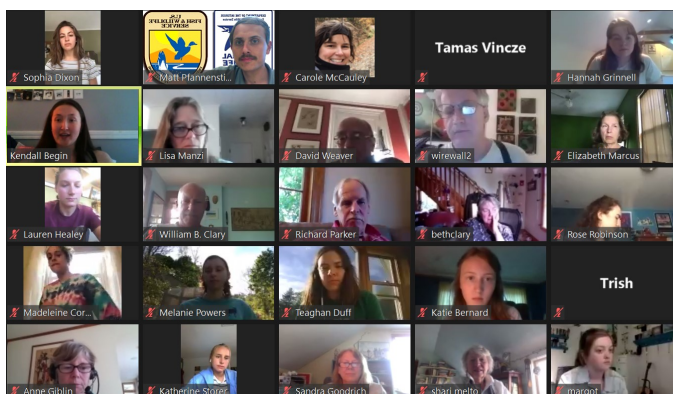
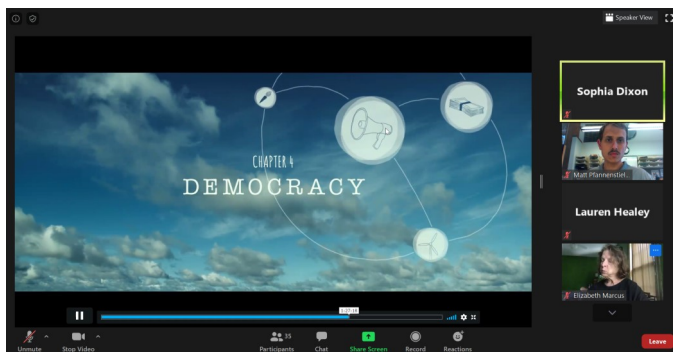
change?" The individuals in the small groups are given time to think about an answer. After a few minutes, each of the smaller groups share what they discussed in the larger group.

One goal of a Climate Café is that participants will go home and introduce these discussions to their own social circles. They can take the actions they discussed to their own community to make an impactful difference in relation to climate change.

During a virtual Climate Café, we started it off by watching a section of the film Tomorrow, where they discuss how people used democracy across the world to make changes in their communities. We discussed how we could reach out to people, especially those who we might disagree with, and have a meaningful conversation with them about topics like climate change. A small group discussion gave everyone an opportunity to share what they were thinking. This particular approach allowed everyone to share their ideas and opinions, including those who might not otherwise share in a larger group.

After talking in the smaller groups, the high school student who led the discussion in the smaller group shared what they discussed with the big group. After every group has had a chance to report out, the process is repeated with a second question. This question was "How can we make sure that the person we are having a conversation with feels like they are being heard?" Having both of these discussions got people to think about productive ways to have a conversation based around a difficult topic with people you may disagree with.

Does sound like something you may be interested in? Or, do you want to know more? There will be more Climate Cafes in the future (both virtual and in person). Check out the climate café website: <https://sites.google.com/mrstdmail.org/virtual-climate-cafes/home>. There is information about how to sign up for future events, the students that lead the discussions and more! ◀



Screen captures from an online Climate Café discussion via the free 'Zoom' video conferencing platform.

Laying the Groundwork to Remove an Old Dam

by Matt Poole, Visitor Services Manager

Great Bay NWR is a landscape that has had many 'lives.' Farming was the dominant land use historically. From 1951 to 1989, Pease Air Force Base supported America's Cold War defense readiness. Then, in 1992, a new, 1100 acre national wildlife refuge was carved from a corner of the former base. Particularly during the early years, one could walk across the refuge and encounter diverse reminders of earlier land uses including stonewalls, an old mansion, concrete bunkers, and even a 100' foot tall water tower. And, of course, there are the two Peverly ponds.

Portsmouth was a rapidly growing community in the first years of the last century. Its public water authority, concerned about keeping pace with a growing demand, built two dams on a small brook in nearby Newington (about 1902). The impoundments (or reservoirs) that formed behind the dams were called Upper and Lower Peverly Pond. A pumping station, positioned just below the lowermost dam, conveyed water to Portsmouth's main water supply system. Ironically, after only a few years of use, the Peverly impoundments fell out of favor as a water source due, primarily, to the organic content of the water.



Photo: Matt Poole/FWS
The power take-off or 'PTO' on the refuge's farm tractor powers the large water pump. In this photo, the tractor is actually positioned on the dam at the south end of Lower Peverly Pond.



Photo: Matt Poole/FWS
The top of Lower Peverly Pond, looking south toward the dam. The water level has been dramatically lowered due to Bob Springfield's efforts.

In 1951, the U.S. Air Force took over ownership of the ponds from the Portsmouth Waterworks. Thereafter, Upper Peverly was used for boating and fishing, while Lower Peverly became a favorite local swimming hole. With establishment of a new national wildlife refuge in 1992, ownership of, and responsibility for, the Peverly ponds transferred to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS).

During an inspection in 2006, the lower dam was determined to be unsafe. Following the recommendation of the NH Dept. of Environmental Services, the FWS decided to pursue decommissioning of the dam, rather than repair it.

Because environmental contaminants were found in the sediments above the dam, the fix is not a simple matter of breaching or removing it. Working with engineers, the FWS arrived at an approach that will result in a series of 'step-pools,' defined by low-height grade control structures (made of rocks), that will serve to slow the water, stabilize sediments, and create diverse vegetative zones throughout the dewatered reservoir. As the restored floodplain stabilizes, this approach will promote the establishment of a healthy and diverse stand of vegetative communities and aquatic habitats that support a variety of fish and wildlife species.

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Meet Our New Manager!

by Matt Hillman, Refuge Manager

Matt Hillman comes to Parker River from Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) in Chatham, MA, where he has managed the refuge's biological, maintenance, and visitor services programs since 2015. Much like Parker River NWR Complex, Monomoy, including its offshore wilderness islands, is a globally important bird nesting and migration site, and includes the largest common tern nesting colony in the world. Prior to 2015, Matt was an assistant manager at Hopper Mountain NWR Complex in Ventura, CA, where he planned wildlife habitat development projects, including a rotational cattle grazing program, to benefit such endangered species as the California condor. Matt has also assumed interim roles as deputy manager at Yukon-Delta NWR in Bethel, AK, and manager at Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes NWR in Guadalupe, CA.

Matt holds a Master of Science in Fisheries and Wildlife Sciences from Virginia Tech and a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife and Fisheries Conservation, along with a Certificate in Coastal and Marine Sciences, from the University of Massachusetts Amherst. His graduate research focused on the population dynamics of seabirds and the effects of military aircraft, over-sand vehicles, and beach recreation on wildlife at Cape Lookout National Seashore, NC.

Matt, his wife Kristen, 3-year old son Jack, 2-year old son Logan, and dog Jax enjoy traveling, hiking, wilderness backpacking, kayaking, fishing, and bird watching. He and his family are thrilled to be relocating to the Newburyport area in late June, and to meet the many partners who contribute to make this refuge complex so extraordinary. ◀

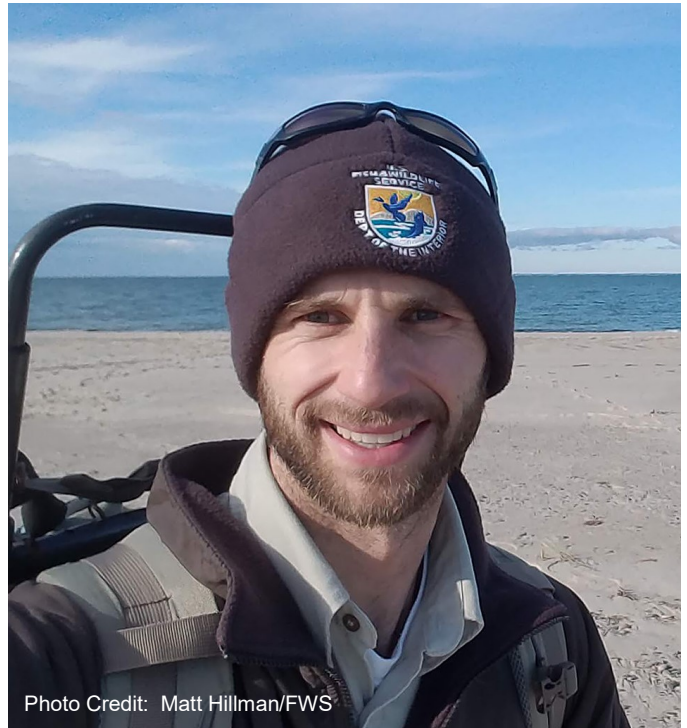


Photo Credit: Matt Hillman/FWS

Matt Hillman, on the beach of Monomoy National Wildlife Refuge (located off the “elbow” of Cape Cod).

...Removing an Old Dam

(Continued from page13)

Ahead of the formal decommissioning and restoration project slated to begin this fall, the refuge's own Bob Springfield has been busily laying a good foundation for that work by gradually lowering the water level in Lower Peverly Pond. The idea is that the newly exposed soils should quickly revegetate, in turn helping to stabilize the contaminants.

Dam removals have become very popular among both conservationists and the general public. Restoring an artificial impoundment to a natural stream course is visually compelling. But, as is the case with the Lower Peverly Pond situation, seldom is a dam removal either simple or quick! ◀

Meet Refuge Volunteer Stan Czesnick

by Jean Adams, Visitor Services Ranger

Stan Czesnick has been a volunteer since April 2018. After retiring from his 30-year career with the Social Security Administration, he contacted me about volunteering. Originally, he started out as a Plover Warden but when the Sunday afternoon slot at the information desk became open, Stan was kind enough to temporarily step in. That was two years ago and Stan has now become a regular Sunday volunteer. This is a huge help as weekends slots at the information desk are hard to fill and we get the most visitation on weekends.

It is obvious that Stan enjoys working at the desk. He rarely misses a Sunday and has never cancelled at the last minute which would leave me to close the visitor center or to pull a person from the very busy gatehouse to staff the desk. I really appreciate this level of reliability. He says he takes his commitment very seriously just as if it were a paid job.

Stan enjoys informing visitors about the refuge and all it has to offer. He loves to share with them some of his favorite places as well as some of the more unique aspects of various trails and walkways. He frequently encourages visitors to look at the art displays in the auditorium and loves to show case the refuge via the 12 minute info video. Stan also enjoys watching the interaction between the young children and their parents as they explore the hands on displays. He says that meeting people from other parts of the US or the world is always fascinating.

In his spare time, Stan is an avid photographer and has facilitated a photography group at his local library. He is also a world traveler and his photographic skill comes in handy documenting his exotic trips.

When asked for his advice to fellow volunteers, Stan says: "Share your passion for the refuge as well as your own experiences there. I find that visitors really respond to that. You will have many great conversations with the visitors."

Thank you Stan for helping Parker River NWR be such a special place! ◀



Refuge Volunteer Stan Czesnick

The Wrack Line is the official newsletter of the Parker River National Wildlife Refuge. Published quarterly in the fall, winter, spring and summer.

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